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ABSTRACT

This review of issues facing administrators of community college libraries and learning resources centers focuses on four main areas: (1) organization of services; (2) maximizing library effectiveness; (3) administrative qualifications; and (4) standards for community college libraries. It begins by arguing that, since a library reflects the goals and objectives of the institution it services, a library serving a community college has to provide a wider range of learning resources than a library at a traditional four-year college or university. This is because the community college seeks to provide not only a comprehensive curriculum of transferable academic programs, but also remedial programs, continuing education, guidance and counseling, vocational/technical training, and community service. Results of library research indicate that: the organization and scope of services in a community college library vary significantly from one institution to another, depending largely on the priorities and resources of each institution; a good working relationship with the faculty is the most effective way of increasing library use; most directors had a library science background according to a nationwide survey conducted in 1972, but some professionals suggest this is not necessary; and a revised "Guidelines for Two-Year Learning Resources Programs" published in 1982 has not met with total agreement, but the review process provided an opportunity for reaffirmation of the basic tenets of community college librarianship by a large number of the professionals involved. (DMC)

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ADMINISTRATION IN COMMUNITY COLLEGE LIBRARIES

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ADMINISTRATION IN COMMUNITY COLLEGE LIBRARIES

INTRODUCTION

A library reflects the goals and objectives of the institution it serves. A library serving a community college, therefore, will have to provide a wider range of learning resources than will a library at a traditional four-year college or university. This is because the community college seeks to provide not only a comprehensive curriculum of transferable academic programs, but also remedial programs, continuing education, guidance and counseling, vocational/technical training, and community service.

"A new term, the learning resource center (LRC), is generally used to differentiate the traditional library from one that is meeting the kinds of needs for library services that the community college has" (15, p. 339). However, other names are not uncommon; a sampling of the literature reveals: library/learning center, learning resources center, instructional media center, educational development center (15, p. 339), instructional materials services, and multi-media resource center (6, p. 405).

The myriad names are intended to show that libraries have gone beyond the printed form in an effort to meet the many needs of their diverse clientele. According to Mellen,

> [t]he typical LRC offers a comprehensive range of print and non-print media and excellent facilities for using them, although there is considerable variation. Media commonly available include books, pamphlets, periodicals, microforms, illustrations, filmstrips, videotapes, transparencies, disc recordings, audiotapes, multi-media packages, realia and other self-instructional materials (12, p. 151).

Smith asserts that the LRC is much more than a multi-media library, however. She says "the LRC is more actively involved in the learning process than the traditional library and represents the gathering of expertise in a concerted effort to further the mission of the institution of which it is a part" (15, p. 339).

The terms LRC and library are used interchangeably in this paper to refer to multi-media facilities at a community college unless they are qualified to suggest a traditional, print-oriented facility. This is not to say that all community colleges have an LRC, but those which don't are relatively few and not of concern here.

To be sure, the term "library" is still much in use a decade after the first "Guidelines for Two-Year College Learning Resource Programs" encouraged the LRC designation. Dale points out that "[t]he name may be LRC in one place, yet another sign may say library and the sign on the door may say library hours" (6, p. 405). She attributes to Roger Schnell the observation that "the community college library is in a state of transition as it seeks to identify new roles, utilize new materials, and explore new methods of learning. Schnell speculated that once the new hat fits better, the center would again be called simply a library" (6, p. 405).

ORGANIZATION OF SERVICES

The organization and scope of services in a community college library will vary significantly from one institution to the next. Many factors will have an impact on decisions relating to how a library collection is arranged and administered. Veit suggests that they are not all based on a desire to create the best of all possible worlds:

> There is the impact of history, or differently expressed, the persistence of an established pattern even after the basis for its continued existence has disappeared. There is the general administrative college pattern into which the learning resource center must fit. There is the size of the institution; generally the larger the institution the more administrative levels are necessary. There is the preferred administrative style of the person or groups who are in policy-setting positions. There is the inclination to adopt a pattern that has been successfully used in other institutions (17, p. 42)..

Dale contends that "[t]he administrative organization of community college libraries continues the trend toward unified centers...which house, service, and circulate both print and audiovisual materials" (6, p. 406). She claims that the most common pattern of organization has all materials and services administered by one director. Furthermore, audiovisual materials should be selected, cataloged and circulated in the same way as books because "[i]t is the content that is important, not the format" (6, p. 406).

In the 20 community college libraries studied by Dennison, however, "the patterns observed for the organization of materials form a series ranging from integration through various stages of separation

(7, p. 124). For example, eight institutions provided access to all learning resources materials, print and non-print, through one integrated catalog. Eight others had two or more separate catalogs for print and non-print materials, while four schools provided bibliographic access primarily for print materials only. Most non-print materials were uncataloged (7, p. 125).

All of these arrangements are presumably based on decisions made after considering the priorities and available resources at each of the community colleges. Leaving non-print materials uncataloged implies that there is not enough staff to catalog everything, so books were given priority. The choice of a separated catalog access over an integrated file may have been due to physical limitations of the facilities, a librarian's conviction that two discrete files are more useable than one large catalog, or perhaps it was simply too time-consuming to combine the separate files after two units were merged administratively.

Dennison's survey also revealed disparity in the way that library staffs are organized. Although almost half were organized by function, e.g., cataloging and reference service, one-fourth of the schools combined function with form, e.g., books and videocassettes, to meet their staffing needs. The six other community college libraries had staff patterns based on a combination of function, geography, clientele, and form (7, p. 125).

Trinker says that "[i]n some institutions, library staffing seems to be determined more by the size of the book collection than by the number of students to be served. Inadequate staffing continues to be a matter of indifference to some college administrators" (16, p. 468).

Not surprisingly, Dennison found that

> those institutions that provided a greater degree of separation of materials...also provided a greater degree of separation of catalogs...and introduced the factors of form, clientele, and geography into the organization of their staffs (7, p. 126).

According to Dennison "[d]espite the wealth of descriptive information, the literature seldom contains information analyzing or evaluating specific patterns of organization for their effectiveness in meeting the informational and instructional needs of the community" (7, p. 123).

"Related to the matter of administrative organization is the organization of books and audiovisual materials on the shelves" (6, p. 407). Dale found that more than two-thirds of the libraries surveyed shelved their books on open stacks and the audiovisual materials in a closed area. However, in a few libraries books and audiovisual materials were shelved separately in respective open areas. Fewer interfiled all materials (6, p. 407).

Giles contends that "[f]ar more important than amassing an inventory of hardware and software...is the librarians' responsibility for the development and implementation of a learning resources program or system to support the utilization of media and facilities in a manner consistent with the curriculum" (8, p. 51).

MAXIMIZING LIBRARY EFFECTIVENESS

"The community college librarian must be an active, aggressive, dynamic, and resourceful person with ability to undertake all duties of the specialized librarians of larger institutions" (16, p. 468). Not only does he have to understand the varied types of material and equipment in his collection, but he must attempt to serve

> a wider range of student abilities, skills, interests, motivation and achievement than is usually found in the lower division of senior institutions. Community college students may be uncertain in their career goals and need an opportunity to repair weak backgrounds. Consequently, the community college librarian must combine strong guidance ability with his library proficiency (16, p. 467-8).

According to Reynolds, "[t]he chief incentive students have to use the library is derived from the teaching staff. Teachers with a strong recognition of the value of the library will be more likely to transmit this attitude to the student than the teacher who does not recognize the value" (14, p. 179). Some libraries seek to build good relationships with faculty members by involving them in the materials selection process and by offering classes on utilizing media and instructional materials more effectively. Once faculty become aware of the benefits to be gained from using the materials, they will presumably make library use an integral part of course instruction. For example, "[t]hrough audiovisual services, [the library] often provides faculty with the mechanism to suggest a course or provide a mediated approach to an entire course or program of study" (15, p. 339).

ADMINISTRATIVE QUALIFICATIONS

Being in charge of an LRC is not a responsibility to be taken lightly. Wallace observes that

> [a]dministrators of public comprehensive learning resource programs, comprised of library and audiovisuals, are fulfilling roles of multi-media specialists, with campuswide responsibilities for a learning environment, equipped with omni-media and manned by diverse personnel. Their expertise crosses departmental lines and projects into the classroom, where instruction is offered in transfer, occupational, continuing, and remedial education (18, p. 503).

"The Head of the LRC must have an understanding of both traditional and audiovisual fields, and may have a background in either" (12, p. 152). Matthew's 1972 nationwide survey (published in 1979) indicated that directors with a library science background predominated then, but "[w]ith the consolidation of library and audio-visual in the majority of centers, those with a graduate degree in media other than librarianship could meet the recommendations set forth in the new [1972] "Guidelines" and in the future have a higher representation among the directors" (11, p. 310). There were very few directors with graduate degrees in both library science and audiovisual at the time of the survey (11, p. 310).

Giles suggests that the chief administrator of an LRC need not be a librarian. She says that "[t]he most essential qualities in the head of such a unit are management ability, the ability to relate to people on all levels, and the ability to view the role of the LRC in relation to the total educational program" (8, p. 55).

Specialized training is not undesirable, however. Trinkner contends that

> [a]n understanding of the broad sweep of community college programs during professional preparation is of vital importance to library personnel. Careful study of the identity and purpose of the community college should be preservice preparation of the librarian planning to serve in this unique institution (16, p. 468).

Matthew's survey supports Trinkner because 91.6 per cent of the responding directors "recommended study of these unique institutions in a course entitled 'community junior colleges'" (11, p. 308). She adds: "There is little in the literature to suggest that there were many opportunities for studying junior college librarianship, although 91 per cent of the respondents recommended the study of 'junior college libraries' as well" (11, p. 308).

Smith contends that the ideal administrative structure "combines production, collecting, storage, retrieval, and servicing functions under the administration of one officer who reports directly to the senior academic officer at the college" (15, p. 339). Veit eventually agrees but first says that "[a]s a matter of principle it is desirable that the LRC head report to the highest official possible" (17, p. 47); he recalls that the 1960 Standards called for the librarian to be appointed by and directly responsible to the chief administrative officer of the college, but he adds that "[t]his is no longer expressed in such an unequivocal way" (17, pp. 47-8).

Veit also acknowledges that it is possible to have a satisfactory arrangement where the director of the LRC is assigned to a division other than academic affairs; he warns, however, that such a situation carries "a risk that the learning resources program may not achieve the necessary close contact and interaction with the instruction program" (17, p. 49).

The LRC administrator's effectiveness is greatly dependent on the competency of his staff. Giles speculates that a large LRC staff might include

> not only librarians and clerks, but media specialists, library technicians, audiovisual technicians, television engineers, teachers of individualized and/or developmental instructions, and, in some cases, research specialists and computer programmers (8, pp. 55-6).

Smith says that it is not an uncommon report pattern to have the LRC divided administratively into production and library services, with the heads of these units reporting to the LRC chief administrator directly. In such situations, "personnel in production will [usually] be media specialists, whereas both librarians and media specialists will be found in the library services unit" (15, p. 339).

It is surely not difficult to understand Giles' contention that "[a] whole new range of 'media people' has emerged, and the LRC administrator must now employ a broader set of criteria in the recruiting, selection, and supervision of personnel" (8, p. 56).

STANDARDS FOR COMMUNITY COLLEGE LIBRARIES

Standards for libraries are, in general, useful measures for evaluating and developing resources and services. They provide an administrator with a gauge for assessing an institution's merits and weaknesses, and they are sometimes beneficial for attracting funding for special needs.

Library standards are not without their detractors, however. Hoffman asserts: "Within any type-of-library category,...the degree of change is far from uniform: while there are many community and junior college libraries with expanded functions, there are also many community and junior college libraries with traditional functions and many academic libraries with broader roles" (10, p. 276). Because of this line of reasoning, Hoffman believes that there is little likelihood that quantitative standards can "deal satisfactorily with a wide range in levels and types of services in two-year college [learning resources programs] across the nation" (10, p. 277). He also feels that "[q]uantitative standards developed at the state level would probably be more appropriate than national standards because of similarities in costs, funding, governance, philosophy, etc., within a given state" (10, p. 277).

These reservations are probably part of the reason why Hoffman resigned as chairman of the ad hoc subcommittee appointed in 1975 by the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL: a division of the American Library Association) to develop quantitative standards for two-year colleges. The "official" standards document at that time was the "Guidelines for Two-Year Learning Resources Programs" which had been approved by ACRL along with the American Association

of Community and Junior Colleges (AACJC) and the Association for Educational Communications and Technology (AECT) in 1972 (1, p. 305). The 1972 "Guidelines" consisted "entirely of qualitative criteria to be applied to the colleges. In contrast to both the college and university standards, no quantitative criteria were included in the basic document..." (19, p. 22).

According to Wallace, "[s]ome few individuals expressed disappointment about the lack of quantitative requirements...but the 'Guidelines' received general acceptance in the two-year institutions" (19, p. 22).

Wallace became chairman of the ad hoc subcommittee after Hoffman resigned. His group and representatives from AECT formed a task force and proceeded to review the "Guidelines" sentence by sentence. He says that "[t]he core of the document was found still to be germane" (19, p. 29).

The revised document featured minor changes, rearrangements, and deletions when it was recommended to the ACRL, AECT, and the AACJC. "A new definition of a two-year institution suggested by AACJC was incorporated to clarify that the document was designed for all types of two-year institutions" (19, p. 29).

The proposed revisions were accepted in 1981 and published in the first two 1982 issues of College & Research Libraries (2, pp. 5-10, 45-9). They will surely not please everyone, but the review process at least provided the opportunity for reaffirmation of the basic tenets of community college librarianship by a large number of the professionals involved.

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